Concord Academy Theatre 1 Improvisational Play

Spring 2020

Teacher: Shelley Bolman
Office: By the Green Room, off of the hallway running from the stage right lobby into the Upper Stufac.

“I think that the hard work of a non-racist sensibility is the boundary crossing, from safe circle into wilderness: the testing of boundary, the consecration of sacrilege. It is the willingness to spoil a good party and break an encompassing circle, to travel from the safe to the unsafe...” -Patricia Williams

Theatre 1 Improvisational Play is designed to develop the primary tools of creative dramatic performance: the imagination, the body, the voice, and the capacity to listen and respond in a collaborative way. Improvisational Play is fundamentally a class about creativity and risk-taking.

- The importance of group collaboration and group response wherein being a part of the whole generates trust and frees you, the player, to play.
  “Those who function out of fear, seek security, those who function out of trust, seek freedom.” – William Hurt

- The need to see each other as fellow players participating on equal terms. Just as there is no right or wrong answer in theatre, there are no good or bad players. We are all on the same journey.

- The process is the key, not the product.
  “It is better to travel well, than arrive.” – Buddha

- The importance of getting out of our heads and into the space, encouraging spontaneity and letting go of the editing.

- We will bring ourselves fully to the work, be open and receptive to our fellow players and create an atmosphere of trust and support that will encourage risk-taking, creativity and growth.
**Assessment in Theatre 1 Improvisational Play** is based on a combination of factors:

Personal initiative.

Willingness to accept the challenges and risk inherent in personal expression and collaboration.

Completion of any homework and written assignments.

Participation, enthusiasm and attitude – towards yourself, your peers and the work you present in class.

Individual growth over the course of the semester.

**Class Focus**

Our in-class exercises and games will take many forms. Most will be collaborative and improvisational projects that focus on a specific aspect of play. We will -

Explore the creative process and problem solving

Play and (re)create in collaboration with others

Stay flexible and non-judgmental in our thinking

Accept “mistakes” as gifts

Say “yes and...”

Have fun

"*The purpose of art is to lay bare the questions which have been hidden by the answers.*"  
– *James Baldwin*
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Attendance & Participation

Class attendance is mandatory. If you are on the friend bench and arrive late, you will be marked late. If it is your Chapel, please ask for permission to be late. If you have a phone with you, please place it in the basket on the piano upon arrival.

Wear loose comfortable clothing suitable for movement and layers for changing temperature. No gum, food, or drink in class except water. Outdoor and hard-soled shoes should not be worn in the space. Bare feet are fine. Be punctual and please take care of bodily functions before class when possible. Because this is a collaborative class, please ask to leave the room out of respect for your peers and the process.

Enthusiastic participation in all class games, exercises, discussions, critiques, and improvisations is essential. You cannot succeed in this class, the theatre, or in life, by sitting on the sidelines. Throw caution to the wind, be fearless and daring, and participate with gusto.

Journal

I may assign specific journal assignments throughout the term. These can be submitted virtually in Schoology.

Evaluation

50% participation + 40% progress + 10% assignments.
A = Consistently Exemplary Work, B = Good Work, C = Acceptable Work, D/F = Inconsistent, unfocused, uncommunicative work.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Failure to perform the tech requirement for this class will drop your grade a full step. An ‘A’ becomes an ‘A-‘ etc.

The syllabus is subject to change!

NOTE: Evaluation of PROGRESS is not about Getting It Right. It’s about the willingness to take a risk and fail. Let yourself have an experience. Dare to Be
Average. The pressure of doing it “right” doesn’t allow for new, fresh, and different surprises to happen. It’s about pushing your own personal envelope.

**Required Tech Work on a CA Production**
You can, and must, get involved behind the scenes in the various areas of design and technical theatre: set construction and painting; props creation and organization; hanging and focusing lighting instruments; sewing and fitting costumes; box office; publicity; and so forth. You are required to complete **3 hours of tech time for this course**. I will share the dates for the tech opportunities as soon as I know what they are.

**Required Play Attendance**
If you are not involved in the winter mainstage production of *Indecent* you are required to attend it – Fri-Sat. February 21-22 at 7:30pm. The same applies to Directors’ Workshop – Fri-Sat. April 24-25 at 8pm. You are strongly encouraged to attend all other performances – musical concerts, poetry readings, and other creative presentations. CA also offers regular trips into Boston for dance and theatre. If you cannot attend a CA performance, alert me in advance and we will figure out another show for you to see.

Most importantly, be yourself and have fun!